



California Department of Fish and Game Deer Management Program 2003 Deer Zone Information

Wildlife Programs Branch
1812 9th Street Sacramento, CA 95814

Northern California and North Coast Region

General Deer Hunting Information For

ZONE X-5a

and

Area-Specific Archery Hunt A-8

(Includes Additional Hunt M-4)

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR DEER HUNT ZONE

This information sheet has been prepared to assist deer hunters applying for, or planning to hunt in, Zone X-5a located in portions of Lassen County. The following information should be useful to hunters for archery season (A-8; Zone X-5a Archery Hunt), Zone X-5a general season and any "additional hunts" within this geographic area. For more specific information or additional questions regarding this area contact the Northern California and North Coast Region Office, 601 Locust Street, Redding, CA 96001 (530-225-2300).

REGULATIONS

Laws and regulations are designed to conserve wildlife and to provide for an equitable distribution of game mammals. The hunter who knows the laws and regulations can enjoy the hunting experience more. All hunters should read and be familiar with the current hunting regulations available online at:

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm/2003/mammalregs03.html

The 2003 deer hunting regulations specific for Zone X-5a (general season tag), Area-Specific Archery Hunt A-8 (archery season only tag), and any additional hunts are at the end of this sheet.

To hunt deer during the archery season in Zone X-5a, hunters must possess an A-8 hunt tag (Zone X-5a Archery Hunt). This tag is valid **ONLY** during the prescribed archery season and **may not** be used to hunt deer during the general zone season, even if using archery equipment.

To hunt deer during the general season (rifle) in Zone X-5a, a hunter must possess a Zone X-5a tag. This tag is valid **ONLY** during the prescribed general season for that zone. These tags **may not** be used to hunt deer during the Hunt A-8 archery season, even if using archery equipment.

This zone is a popular deer hunting area with lower tag quotas. Any additional deer hunts in Zone X-5a are listed in the Additional Deer Hunts section, below. Typically, tags for Zone X-5a, Hunt A-8 and any additional deer hunts are in high demand and distributed through the Department's Big Game Drawing held in June. To hunt in this area, hunters must plan ahead and are encouraged to submit hunt applications by late May. For information regarding deer tag application procedures and obtaining a deer tag for this area see the Big Game Hunting Booklet, available on-line at:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/licensing/biggame/biggamebook.html>

Successful hunters are reminded to immediately fill out both portions of the tag and permanently mark the date of kill; attach the tag to the antlers, or ear if antlerless; have the tag validated and countersigned; and return the completed report card portion to the department within 30 days of taking a deer.

LAND OWNERSHIP/PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

Zone X-5a contains a mixture of both public and private lands. Remember you must obtain and have in your possession written permission to hunt on private property. Hunter trespass laws are strictly enforced. Public lands within Zone X-5a are administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). For information regarding these lands contact the following:

BLM Office:

Eagle Lake Field Office, 2950 Riverside Drive, Susanville, CA 96130 (530-257-0456)

In Zone X-5a and other zones throughout California, additional deer hunting opportunities may exist on private property licensed through the Department's Private Lands Management Program (PLM). For more information on the PLM and to obtain a list of participating ranches, go to the following link:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/plm.html>

MAPS

For general maps detailing individual zone or additional deer hunt boundaries, go to the following link:

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/deer_maps.html

One of the more comprehensive guides to this area is the "Recreation Guide for Northeastern California and Northwestern Nevada" which encompasses the zone.

BLM surface management maps are also valuable sources and include the Eagle Lake and Susanville maps. You can purchase these maps at BLM district offices or you can contact the BLM at 2800 Cottage Way, Room E2841, Sacramento, CA 95825 (916-978-4400).

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps are very helpful, especially for topographic features that are not displayed on USFS or BLM maps. USGS maps may be available from sporting goods, backpacking or engineering stores or you can contact the USGS directly at: U.S. Geological Distribution Center, Denver Federal Center, Box 25286, Denver, CO 80225 (888-ASK-USGS).

ACCESS/MAJOR ROADS

There are extensive tracts of public lands with excellent access in Zone X-5a. Primary roadways in the zone are State Highway 139 (western X-5a) and U.S. Highway 395 (eastern X-5a). County Road 536 (Horse Lake Road) bisects the zone between Highway 139 and Highway 395. Many County and BLM roads branch off of these primary roadways providing access to public lands.

WEATHER CONDITIONS/TRAVEL TIPS

The weather in this region is highly variable so BE PREPARED. The weather is usually quite hot and dry, but early storms are not uncommon. Snow fall will be a rare occurrence with these storms but heavy rains can make many roads very difficult, if not impossible, to travel. You should be prepared with appropriate clothing and equipment for a variety of weather conditions.

Zone X-5a covers a large geographic area. The terrain can be very steep and rugged and vegetation can be extremely dense. As you should do in all remote areas, hunters are urged to bring a shovel, a good spare tire, extra water, etc. Use care when operating any vehicle off-road and check with the BLM for rules and regulations regarding vehicle and travel restrictions in the area. Horses can be useful in some portions of X-5a. However, remember that it may be necessary to carry supplemental horse feed into the back country. Contact the local BLM office for more information regarding forage conditions for livestock.

CAMPING

Campgrounds are very limited within Zone X-5a. The closest "improved" campground is actually outside of Zone X-5a at north of Eagle Lake (west of the State Highway 139 & County Road A-1 intersection).

There is limited camping at the Honey Lake Wildlife Area, Fleming Unit, near Litchfield. Campgrounds are marked on BLM maps. Camping outside of designated campgrounds is usually permitted on BLM lands. However, during fire season special regulations may apply and it will be necessary to obtain a fire permit from the BLM. You can also check with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection office for rules in specific areas.

Please, DO NOT CAMP at springs or other water sources important to wildlife and livestock. Remaining at artificial wildlife water sources (guzzlers) can be a Fish & Game violation. YOU can pack water, wildlife can't!

HARVEST INFORMATION

Information on deer harvest for this area is available in tables contained in the annual Deer Kill Reports available on-line at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/deerhunt.html> The most useful tables for the purposes of planning or applying for hunts in this area are Tables 1b (Harvest and Success Information), 2a (Antler Class Information) and 10b (Drawing Statistics).

HERD CONDITIONS AND HABITATS

The deer population in Zone X-5a is at low density and considered stable to slightly declining, yet considerably below levels seen in the late 1960's and 1970's. As with most deer herds in California and other western states, the long-term population trend has been on a steady decline since the 1960's and 1970's. These long-term declines have been due to land management practices that have resulted in large-scale intense wildfires, changes toward more mature and less diverse habitats, and ultimately reduced quality and quantity of deer habitats. Short-term fluctuations in deer populations are usually attributed to weather events that affect forage production. Juniper expansion and invasion is a chronic problem that affects deer forage production in this zone.

The subspecies of deer inhabiting Zone X-5a is the Rocky Mountain mule deer and they are considered migratory deer. Deer generally move to higher elevations in the northwestern portion of Zone X-5a in late spring and remain until the first heavy fall storms force them down below the snow line to the southeast. The downward movement often occurs during the hunting season, so hunters should be prepared to move to lower areas later in the season after stormy weather.

The vegetation is highly varied throughout Zone X-5a ranging from low sage, sagebrush, bitterbrush and aspen to juniper habitats. Generally speaking, deer populations in this area respond favorably to vegetation disturbances that enhance brush species. Riparian areas (areas along watercourses), recently burned areas that have re-sprouted with brush are good areas to hunt. Typically, lower densities of deer are observed in the more densely forested juniper areas or in older, more decadent brushlands.

HUNTING TIPS AND WHERE TO LOOK FOR DEER

Successful hunters often spend a considerable amount of time scouting pre-season, locating individual or groups of deer, recently used deer trails, and feeding and bedding areas. You may not see many deer from the roads in this area and generally the more successful hunters do more hiking to locate deer. Binoculars and/or spotting scopes can be very helpful for locating and identifying deer at greater distances. In general, attempt to hunt areas that are away from other activities such as concentrations of hunters, vehicles, and/or livestock.

Generally, the best hunting is near stands of bitterbrush, mountain mahogany, or tall sagebrush. Historically, some of the more popular and productive areas in Zone X-5a include: Fredonyer Peak, Horse Lake, Pine Creek, Snowstorm Mountain, Shaffer Mountain and Tunnison Mountain. Deer on Shaffer and Snowstorm Mountain move seasonally up and down the slopes. The downward movement often occurs during the hunting season, so hunters should be prepared to move to lower areas later in the season after stormy weather.

For additional information about deer hunting in California, see the Department's publication "Guide To Hunting Deer In California" at the following web site:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/deerguide.pdf>

ADDITIONAL DEER HUNTS

In 2003, one additional hunt opportunity exists in Zone X-5a: Hunt M-4 (Horse Lake Muzzleloading Rifle Buck Hunt). For general maps detailing the individual hunt area boundaries, go to the following link:

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/deer_maps.html

2003 ZONE AND ADDITIONAL HUNT SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

§ 360. Deer.

Except as otherwise provided in this Title 14, deer may be taken only as follows:

(b) X-Zone Hunts.

(6) Zone X-5a.

(A) Area: In that portion of Lassen County within a line beginning at the junction of Highway 395 and Conservation Center Road (Lassen County A-27) in the town of Litchfield; west on Conservation Center Road to its crossing of Willow Creek; northwest (upstream) on Willow Creek to its crossing of Highway 139 in the Willow Creek Valley; north along Highway 139 to the Termo-Grasshopper Road; east on the Termo-Grasshopper Road to Highway 395; south along Highway 395 to the point of beginning.

(B) Season:

The season in Zone X-5a shall open on the first Saturday in October and extend for 16 consecutive days.

(C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (See subsection 351(a)) or better, per tag.

(D) Number of Tags: 90.

(c) Additional Hunts.

(16) M-4 (Horse Lake Muzzleloading Rifle Buck Hunt).

(A) Area: That portion of Lassen County within the area described as X5a (see subsection 360(b)(6)(A)).

(B) Season: The season for additional hunt M-4 (Horse Lake Muzzleloading Rifle Buck Hunt) shall open on the fourth Saturday in October and extend for nine consecutive days.

(C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (see subsection 351(a)) or better, per tag.

(D) Number of Tags: 5.

(E) Special Conditions: Only muzzleloading rifles as specified in Section 353 may be used.

§ 361. Archery Deer Hunting.

(b) Archery Hunting With Area-specific Archery Tags. Deer may be taken only with archery equipment specified in Section 354, only during the archery seasons as follows:

(7) A -8 (Zone X-5a Archery Hunt).

(A) Area: As described in subsection 360(b)(6)(A).

(B) Season: The archery season for hunt A-8 (Zone X-5a Archery Hunt) shall open on the third Saturday in August and extend for 23 consecutive days.

(C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (see subsection 351(a)) or better per tag.

(D) Number of Tags: 50.

**** GOOD LUCK! ****